Te Ara Kuaka

Supporting Tamariki and Rangatahi After Suspected Suicide Loss

Te Ara Kuaka is a school-based pilot programme for suspected suicide postvention, made possible with support from the New Zealand Mental Health Foundation and the All-of-Population Suicide Prevention Community Fund.

mauri tū, mauri ora
Mental Health Foundation
OF NEW ZEALAND

Growing Through Grief

Growing Through Grief invites schools to join a pilot programme for tamariki and rangatahi grieving after a death by suspected suicide. The programme offers a safe, supported group space to talk about grief after a death by suspected suicide, build coping strategies, and identify trusted supports.

What we are offering

A four-session small-group educational programme for rangatahi with shared experience of suspected suicide bereavement a minimum of 1 month after the event. The programme includes peer support, emotional regulation, support networks, and self-care.

Facilitated by trained Growing Through Grief staff, with wellbeing check-ins and respectful group tikanga.

Flexible delivery in school at times that work for the school community.

This programme complements a school's wider postvention response by providing a careful, age-appropriate education and support programme for tamariki and rangatahi who are ready and willing to participate. It is not counselling or therapy.

How the programme works

Format	Four sessions, each 60–90 minutes delivered at least 1 month after the event.
Group size	3–7 rangatahi, grouped by similar age where possible.
Delivery options	In school or after school with school support.
Facilitation	Two trained facilitators will lead the delivery, with a school contact person available for check-ins and follow-up and ongoing support.
Focus areas	Connection, grief experiences, emotions, support squads, self-care, strengths and remembering.

Benefits of the Programme

Supports wellbeing: young people have a structured safe space to explore grief, emotions, memories and self-care.

Reduces isolation: young people connect with others who have a shared experience.

Strengthens protective supports: young people identify trusted people at home, school and in the community.

Honours culture and connection: the programme includes whakawhanaungatanga, tikanga, karakia, Te Whare Tapa Whā, whānau, identity, memory and belonging.

What schools are asked to provide

- A nominated school contact person for planning, check-ins and follow-up concerns.
- A private, uninterrupted space for sessions.
- Support to identify suitable participants and engage whānau.
- Participation in evaluation to help strengthen the programme.
- Agreement to a safety plan to support safe delivery of the programme.

Safety and readiness

Before a group begins, facilitators will meet with the school and parent, caregiver or whānau to understand the impact of the loss, clarify expectations, and assess readiness. A one-hour information session can also be offered for staff and/or whānau, covering the programme approach and practical strategies for supporting young people. The programme is offered at least one month after the death, with additional support information provided as needed. Schools should maintain existing postvention processes and seek advice from the Ministry of Education Traumatic Incident Team when responding to a suspected suicide or critical incident.



Expression of interest

If your school or kura is interested, we would welcome a conversation about your community context, programme suitability, timing, group size, whānau engagement and, how the pilot could sit alongside your existing wellbeing supports.

To find out more or register interest:
Contact your local Growing Through Grief Coordinator to arrange an initial kōrero.
growingthroughgrief.acw.org.nz/contact-us/

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Te Oranga Ake — Flourishing Together